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SUCCESS.

SUCCESS!—I just now find in a common, poor sort of dictionary, the dictionary every one uses without fear of too much information, that Success may be defined as “prosperity,” or “a fortunate result”—prosperity and good fortune—a *fortune* probably the full meaning. I had not searched the dictionary intent on knowledge, but opened it by chance while thinking of the following lines by some unknown writer:—

“Success :

Prometheus writhing on his rock of pain,
With his eternal chain,
And with Jove’s Vulture gnawing at his heart.

“Success :

In cultured Athens, in yon cell where lies
Old Socrates the Wise;
Drink up the hemlock dregs, and so depart!

It would seem, then, that there are two kinds of success; since the Promethean practice and the theory of Socrates do not agree with the every-day dictionary definition. Yet I may have been hasty and my construction insufficient when I narrowed “prosperity and good fortune” to so poor a meaning as only so many dollars a year, the fortune of a Rothschild or a Gould. A “fortunate result”—that must depend something on the aim. What was the aim of the Fire-Bringer? He had the fortune to obtain the result he sought. For all his rock of expiation, his purpose had prospered, and fire remained his gift to man. Nor were the hemlock dregs so distasteful to the Wise Athenian. Would he have given up his wisdom for some more palatable savor? Pleasant even the poison-taste of hemlock in comparison with a draught of the “good fortune” of folly!

Words, like swords, are two-edged; like sticks, they can have two ends. The aged miser, who is nothing but a lifeless lump of bullion, may be called successful, truly fortunate in the result that satisfies him. That may be considered as the dirty end of the stick; it has dibbled in the mire. The Promethean and Socratic end points “the other way.”

This word *Success* is interesting to us all. From earliest youth to the grave’s edge we cannot be indifferent to it. To lack success is to have an imperfect, an incomplete, a partially ruined life. How many fail! How few of those who fail can say calmly and honestly, as the gray shadows of age begin to fold them in: “My failure does not too much grieve me. I have done my best; I am not blameworthy.”

“Tis not in mortals to command success; I have at least deserved it. Fate only grudges me my wages—Fate, stronger than most earnest and ever-faithful Endeavor.”

Surely to the artist the completeness and perfection of life ought to be more important than to ordinary men. For what sort of an artist is he who leaves Art out of his life? The moral and further bearing of which observation I may leave to the preacher, confining myself here to the question which first set me on this track of thought, the question of *What is Success?* Let me say in Art, for sculptor,

painter, poet, musician, or other servitor in Art’s great temple.

I will take the painter. His necessity of choice—standing as Hercules between Pleasure and Virtue—may not be quite so distinctly marked. By *pleasure* let us mean an easy life, with a delightful occupation, leading to good repute and wealth. By *virtue* we intend that purpose above pleasing, that close adherence to and devout study of his art, which will be surely slow in recognition, perhaps not recognized by his contemporaries; which may keep him poor through life, and give him when most fortunate only the promise of a posthumous fame. Young Hopeful thinks he can go both ways. He studies, he knows something, it may be, of the laborious days and wakeful nights of the enthusiast. But greedy for a swift applause (and the desire of appreciation is natural and good) he forgets the diviner impulse; plumes himself on partial praise; is content with popularity, finds it pay, begins forthwith, however imperceptibly to himself, to paint for patron and purchaser, stoops to the level of a slave, repeats the ordered task, with increasing facility, perhaps, and even more admirable technique; so slides along the slippery floor of fortune, having given up the care to climb, and settles down for life in that hollow place, the enchanted garden of rich and happy mediocrity, the quagmire in which is built the palace of—“*Success*.” So the world, so his fellow artists even, so he himself may call it. The gods for all time know it by the name of *Failure*.

May not the painter be rich? Wherefore not? His calling is honorable, and should be of service to the world. A stock-jobber is not more worthy of a quite sufficient income. But the stock-jobber’s “fortunate result” and fitting reward is in the stocks, an appreciable value. Is there no other fortunate result to be desired and sought for by the artist?

I cannot measure an artist’s success by the same rule as that of a shopman or a speculator. I cannot always call the “fortunate” artist successful. He has a stone-fronted mansion, gives excellent dinners, spends his money like a prince, has fair enjoyment of his surroundings, is a great man—yet does not appear to me to stand Saul-like above the herd. As he is an artist, I dare not call him successful.

Two men of the other class come before my thoughts—two men of the higher class of artists; their names are known, their works not known well. The one, I am sure, was never spoken of as a “successful artist.” The other could tell of years “hopeless and yet hopeful,” “much disappointment,” “again in regard to my works defeat, no reward; great loss.” Yet, to my mind, these two men were pre-eminently successful. Though they acquired neither riches nor the pleasant applause of the multitude (even the critic, the appointed vindicator of unappreciated merit, passing by on the other side, unnoticed)—though both died comparatively young, their lives broken, their memory as once-living men left to the few, the very few who stood near them in affection and admiration—yet were they successful, in the highest meaning of the word. For they had achieved a fortunate result; their purpose (within natural

limitations, for there is in all art the unattainable) had prospered ; they did work which will live.

The men I speak of are Alfred Stevens, the sculptor of the Wellington Monument in St. Paul's, than whom England has had no more thoroughly accomplished artist, and David Scott, the great Scottish painter. Unsuccessful shall we call these men ? Their work lives and will live. How much will live, how much is worth living of the work of some "successful" contemporaries ?

—N. A.

PICTURE PRICES.

NOBODY can gainsay the reflections in the December ART UNION upon the custom that obtains with many artists, of naming one price for a picture, and accepting a lower one when offered ; the arguments used were good ones, but, like most questions, there is also something to be said upon the other side—not in defense of the theory, which is sound, but in extenuation of the practice, which is not an unmixed evil. If the artists were backed by comfortable balances in the banks, the settlement of the matter would be in their own hands ; but when the landlord, the butcher and the baker are clamoring for unpaid accounts, or when the summer's country studies are at stake, what is an artist to do except to make the sacrifice ? He accepts the offered relief and hopes for better luck the next time.

A single man knows just how much it is worth while to endure for a principle of mere business expediency ; but an artist with a needy family has no choice.

It is not alone in this country and with artists that this practice obtains, but all over the world, and with all classes of men, when they must have money or go to the wall.

Very few of our artists place exorbitant first prices on their works, prices which, if obtained, would give them the average incomes of other professional men; but no prices could be named that would be low enough to secure them from still lower offers from some buyers, although the majority of these, as shown by the sales book of the Academy, pay the published prices or let the pictures alone.

The question is not a new one, but one that has been discussed for years by the artists, and there seems to be no help for it except in a demand for pictures at least equal to the supply.

—X.

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The Committee of the *Chambre*, relative to artistic property, has completed the consideration of the proposition of M. Bardoux, and has adopted its main features, which provide that, upon the complaint of the interested parties, any person will be punished who knowingly reproduces or imitates a work of art, even by a different art, or for industrial uses. M. Bardoux has been instructed to prepare a new draught of his proposition, which shall embody also the opinions expressed by some of the members of the Committee.

THERE will be no illustrated catalogue at the New Orleans Exposition. A souvenir album of 100 photogrammes of the "most popular" works is promised instead.

TURNER.

IT is a well-known fact that during the later years of his life Turner was unable to sell a large number of his pictures, although he seldom asked for them a higher price than the modest two hundred guineas, which was considered in those days a sum of money considerably beyond the market value of the artist's work. A certain Scotch gentleman named Monroe, a famous collector of pictures, enjoying an income of from twenty-five to thirty thousand a year, greatly admired Turner's genius, and finding him one day sitting solitary in his gallery, surrounded by some of his finest works, for which he had tried in vain to find purchasers, Monroe suddenly determined to make the artist an offer of a certain sum for the whole collection. "Let me have all these," he said, "and I will write you at once a draft for £25,000. Will you agree to that?"

Turner appeared not altogether displeased at this offer, but told his friend to go and walk about the streets for half an hour or so, and at the end of that time, to come back for his decision. This Monroe accordingly did, but at the end of the half hour, greatly to his disappointment, Turner answered him in the negative, refusing to part with his pictures even for a sum which, at that time, would be considered a very large one. Eight or nine of Turner's finest works were among those which Mr. Monroe would gladly have purchased with his £25,000, but as these identical pictures have since become the property of the National Gallery, the admirers of Turner will no doubt rejoice that the Scotch collector was so unsuccessful in his generous bid.—*Pall Mall Budget*.

AN ANECDOTE.

WE print the following "original" anecdote, omitting the names, although we have a faint suspicion of having frequently met the same "old Joe" in a different dress :—

Said an indignant artist one day to the editor of one of our prominent journals, "Mr. ——, why do you allow such an ignoramus as —— to write about art !" "What ! doesn't he write well about it ?" was the reply. "Write well about it ! he knows no more about art than a Hottentot." "Well that is extraordinary, for I've tried him on religion, literature, prize-fights, murders, and indeed everything else, and have found him a complete failure ; but, believing that every man must be good for something, and as he had never been tried on art, I thought he must surely know something about that."

—B.

It is announced that the Royal Museum of Berlin has just purchased, at the fabulous price of twelve hundred and fifty thousand francs (\$250,000), the famous portrait of Holzschuher, by Albert Durer, until recently exhibited in the Musée Germanique, of Nuremberg; but this picture is an infinitely cheaper bargain than "The Electoral Commission" at \$15,000, or the "Gen. Thomas" at \$10,000, which Congress is being extensively lobbied to purchase for our own national "Chamber of Horrors."